

Swine Flu affects the U.S. and Mexico

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Mangilao, GU – The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that as of 6pm April 25, 2009 (Guam time), 9 human cases of swine influenza A (H1N1) virus infection have been identified in San Diego County and Imperial County, California as well as in San Antonio, Texas. Two more cases have been confirmed in Kansas bringing the number of confirmed U.S. cases to 11.

These cases may be linked to an outbreak of influenza-like-illness (ILI) in Mexico, where as of April this year there have been more than 1,000 cases of ILI with 68 deaths reported throughout the country. Although influenza normally affects the very young and the very old, the majority of reported cases have occurred in otherwise healthy young adults.

“The World Health Organization’s (WHO) Emergency Committee considers the events in the U.S. and Mexico as a public health emergency of international concern,” said Director of the Department of Public Health & Social Services J. Peter Roberto. “WHO recommends that all countries intensify surveillance for unusual outbreaks of influenza-like illness and severe pneumonia.”

“My department is working with local partners to enhance surveillance for any cases of swine flu in our community and we will continue to work closely with CDC to receive guidance and updates as the outbreak unfolds,” said Roberto.

The Director confirms that no cases of swine flu have been identified on Guam at this time and that both the CDC and WHO have not declared the situation to be a global pandemic. According to the CDC Control and Prevention website, swine influenza (swine flu) is a respiratory disease of pigs caused by type A influenza viruses. The symptoms of swine flu in people are the same as those of seasonal human flu. They include a fever with a cough, sore throat, body aches, and tiredness. It is also possible to be infected and have no symptoms.

CDC has NOT recommended that people avoid travel at this time. However, if you are planning travel to San Diego, Texas, Kansas or Mexico, CDC suggests that you monitor the situation, be up-to-date with your routine vaccinations, to include seasonal flu, identify healthcare resources in the area you’re visiting, practice good hygiene and seek medical care if you are feeling sick while traveling.

Several steps you can take to prevent getting and spreading influenza include:

Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way. Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. And if you get sick, CDC recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.

More information about swine flu is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/general_info.htm or you may contact the Department of Public Health & Social Services at 888-8224.